

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 248938

FOLLOWING REPEAT BANGKOK 21303 ACTION SECSTATE INFO GENEVA HONG KONG
AND PARIS 08 OCT 75

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 21303

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CASC, VS, US
SUBJECT: AMERICANS IN SOUTH VIET-NAM

REF: A. BANGKOK 21211 B. STATE 239025

SUMMARY: THREE AMERICANS WERE PERMITTED TO DEPART SAIGON
OCTOBER 7 FOR REASONS THAT ARE NOT CLEAR. ONE WHO WAS CON-
TACTED SAID THERE IS NO NEW INFORMATION ON THE PRISONERS BEING
HELD IN THE PLEIKU AREA. END SUMMARY.

1. AS REPORTED REF A, THREE AMERICANS ARRIVED IN BANGKOK
FROM SAIGON OCTOBER 7. BESIDES PASTOR ALEXANDER KOWLES,
QUAKERS DR. THOMAS HOSKINS AND MS. JULIE FORSYTHE WERE ALSO
ON BOARD. FATHER JOHN TABOR WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE DEPARTED
WITH THEM BUT WAS TURNED BACK FOR LACK OF A CURRENCY EXCHANGE
RECEIPT. WE UNDERSTAND THAT HOSKINS IS OPTIMISTIC THAT TABOR
WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 248938

2. PASTOR KOWLES AND DR. HOSKINS WERE BROUGHT FROM DANANG

TO SAIGON AT THE END OF AUGUST. MS. FORSYTHE (HOSKINS' FIANCE) HAS BEEN LIVING IN SAIGON.

3. DESPITE OUR EFFORTS, WE HAVE NOT YET BEEN ABLE TO MEET WITH THE TWO QUAKERS (REF B), BUT A MENNONITE OFFICIAL IS ATTEMPTING TO SET UP A MEETING FOR OCTOBER 9. EMBASSY OFFICER HAD A LONG CONVERSATION WITH KOWLES.

4. KOWLES SPECULATES THAT THE THREE WERE ALLOWED TO DEPART AS A TEST CASE AND THINKS THAT ANY ADVERSE PUBLICITY STEMMING FROM STATEMENTS HE OR OTHERS MAKE TO THE PRESS WILL HALT ANY FURTHER AMERICAN EXITS. HE IS CONVINCED THAT AMERICANS ARE INDEED BEING HELD AS HOSTAGES BY THE VIETNAMESE BUT CANNOT EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR THE DEPARTURES OCTOBER 7.

5. KOWLES WAS IN CONTACT WITH THE FOLLOWING AMERICANS IN SAIGON: (A) LORENZO DOW JUDSON, WHO IS RAPIDLY LOSING HIS SIGHT, NEEDS AN OPERATION UNOBTAINABLE IN SAIGON, AND HAS LONG BEEN REQUESTING PERMISSION TO LEAVE; (B) FRANCES STARNER; (C) MENNONITES MAX EDIGER AND JAMES HASKIL; (D) MIKE MIELKE AND FAMILY; (E) MAURICE BAUHAHN, WHO IS WORKING AS A LAB TECHNICIAN AT ICRC OFFICE; (F) CLIFFIRN RANDOLPH AND HIS CHINESE WIFE AND DAUGHTER; (G) FATHER JOHN TABOR; (H) LARRY FAIGAN, DESCRIBED AS SOMEWHAT DEMENTED; (I) WILLIAM SMITH; AND (J) JERRY POSNER. TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, THERE ARE NO KNOWN AMERICANS (BESIDE THE PRISONERS) OUTSIDE OF SAIGON.

6. PASTOR KOWLES LAST CHECKED WITH MIELKE AND THE ICRC OFFICE CONCERNING THOSE AMERICANS AND CANADIANS JAILED NEAR PLEIKU. ALL AGREED THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO NEW INFORMATION ABOUT THEM. KOWLES EXPRESSED THE OPINION THAT JAMES LEWIS, OF WHOM HE HAD HEARD, IS BEING HELD WITH THE OTHER PRISONERS, BUT FURTHER QUESTIONING DEVELOPED THAT THIS WAS JUST A GUESS ON HIS PART.

7. HE SAID THE ICRC OFFICE HAS REAL PROBLEMS IN SAIGON. THE VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES RESTRICT ITS OPERATIONS, INCLUDING PROHIBITING ANY TRAVEL OUTSIDE SAIGON.
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PAGE 03 STATE 248938

8. ACCORDING TO KOWLES, ATMOSPHERE IN SAIGON AND DANANG IS BECOMING EXPLOSIVE. HE BELIEVES THAT ALL FOREIGNERS ARE BEING REMOVED FROM THE INTERIOR BECAUSE EITHER A BLOODBATH IS ON ITS WAY OR RESISTANCE IS ON THE INCREASE. IN FACT, HE WONDERED IF SOMETHING HAD NOT ALREADY BEGUN; NO VIETNAMESE ARRIVED FROM DANANG TO SAIGON TO HIS KNOWLEDGE FROM APPROXIMATELY SEPTEMBER 28 UNTIL HE DE-

PARTED, DESPITE PREPARATIONS FOR TRAVEL OF WHICH HE WAS
AWARE. HE SAID THAT THE ECONOMIC SQUEEZE ON SAIGON
RESIDENTS IS BECOMING VERY SEVERE, THIS AT THE SAME
TIME THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE COMMUNISTS ARE INCREASING
THEIR CONTROL OVER THEM. KOWLES, WHO LIVED UNDER THE
CHINESE COMMUNISTS FOR 1 1/2 YEARS IN 1949-50, SAID THAT THEY
WERE "CIVIL GENTLEMEN" IN ATTITUDE AND MANNER COMPARED
TO THE ROUGH NORTH VIETNAMESE HE ENCOUNTERED IN DANANG AND
SAIGON.
MASTERS

UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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